

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for diagnosing a cancer in a mammal, comprising: a) determining sphingosine kinase 1 (SPHK1) ~~SPHK1~~ gene copy number in a test sample from a region of the mammal that is suspected to be precancerous or cancerous, thereby generating data for a test gene copy number; and b) comparing the test gene copy number to data for a control gene copy number, wherein an amplification of the gene in the test sample relative to the control indicates the presence of a precancerous lesion or a cancer in the mammal.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the control gene copy number is two copies per cell.

3. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the cancer is a colon cancer, an ovarian cancer, a lung cancer, a breast cancer, a brain cancer, or a bladder cancer.

4-134. (canceled)